



**A**FTER the coronation at Rheims, the cause of the English was hopelessly lost, but nevertheless numbers of their partisans still occupied important places in France, among them Paris. Contrary to the advice of Joan, Charles VII. wished to march in that direction, to attempt to recover the capital of his realm.

The attack was repulsed; Joan was wounded by an arrow. It was necessary to snatch her away by main force from the foot of the ramparts in order to oblige her to stop the fight. Next day the attack was not resumed; instead, the King continued his journey on the road to Touraine.

This retreat, occasioned by the jealousy of the courtiers, was a terrible blow to Joan's prestige. Thenceforth, in the eyes of all, she was no longer invincible. The holy maid seems to have understood this, for, before departing from before Paris, she placed her weapons as an offering on the altar of Saint Denis, and knelt a long time in prayer.

Half-heartedly supported, almost abandoned from that time forth, but unable to resign herself to inaction, Joan, during the Winter, laid siege to Saint Pierre-le-Moutier and La Charite. At the first, she led the attack and carried the place by assault.

The siege of La Charite dragged along, then weakened, until the besiegers scattered from before it in a panic.

On the 23d of May, hearing that the town of Compiègne was threatened by the English, she repaired thither with four hundred followers. The enemy rushed to meet her. Her men fell back.

"Think only of striking at them!" cried Joan. "It depends upon you alone to discomfit them!" Driven, notwithstanding, under the walls of Compiègne, Joan and her men found the drawbridge raised and the gate lowered. Joan, her back to the moat, still defended herself.

"Surrender yourself!" they called out to her. "I have sworn and pledged my faith to another than you," answered the brave girl, "and I shall keep my oath to him."

In vain was her resistance. They clutched at her long garments, pulling her from her horse, and she was captured.

That was the beginning of her Calvary. First a prisoner of the Sire de Luxembourg, a gentleman without fortune, she was soon sold to the English for the sum of 10,000 livres in Tours currency. Locked in the prison of the Chateau of Rouen, she was guarded day and night by soldiers, from whom she was compelled to endure not only insults but brutality, as her chains prevented her from defending herself.

In the meantime a tribunal, in the pay of the English, brought her to trial. To the insidious questions of the judges, the holy maid could oppose only the straightforwardness and simplicity of her heart.

"I come from God," she said. "I have nothing to do here. Send me back to God, from Whom I came."

Her saints alone had not abandoned her. Joan still received counsel from celestial voices. Saint

Margaret and Saint Catherine appeared to her in the silence of the night and comforted her with cheering words.

And when the judges asked what they said to her, Joan answered: "They awoke me. I joined my hands together in prayer and asked them to give me advice. They told me: 'Ask it of our Lord.'"

"And what did they say after that?"

"That I should answer you boldly."

Then, when she was pressed with further questions: "I cannot tell all; I have more fear of saying something to displease them than of answering you."

They insisted: "But, Joan, is it displeasing to God to tell things that are true?"

"My voices told me certain things that are not for you, but for the King. Ah! if he but knew them he would be more content at dinner. I wish that he knew them, and that I might drink no wine from now to Christmas!"

One day Stafford and Warwick came to see her in her prison and to rally her on her misfortune.

"In the name of God," she exclaimed, "and so

you mock me? I know well that the English will kill me, thinking that after my death they will conquer the kingdom of France, but were they one hundred thousand more than they are they will not have it."

In a fury Stafford hurled himself upon her and would have killed her but for the intervention of those about him.

Meanwhile the trial moved too slowly to suit the English. "Judges, you earn not your money!" they cried to the members of the tribunal.

"I came to the King of France," said Joan, "from God, from the Virgin Mary, from the saints of the victorious church on high; to that church I submit myself, and my works, what I have done or am to do. You call yourselves my judges. Look well, then, to your acts, for in truth I have been sent by God, and you place yourselves in great danger!"

On the 30th of May Joan confessed and received communion. Then she was led to the place of her execution.

Ascending the funeral pile, she asked for a cross, and died in the flames calling upon the name of Jesus. All wept, even the executioners and the judges.

"We are lost! We have burned a saint!" cried the English, fleeing from the spot.

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